



Bitterroot National Forest

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NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Quiet Day on the Gash Creek Fire

HAMILTON, MT; SEPTEMBER 1, 2006 --- Current Size: 8000 Acres Containment: 65%

For the ninth straight day, there was no additional growth on the Gash Creek fire, although interior pockets of unburned vegetation have occasionally put up smoke and these areas may continue to burn as hot and dry weather conditions are expected through next week. The fire is also smoldering on the south side of the Big Creek drainage, but remains unsuppressed in that area due to inaccessibility and extremely rough and rocky terrain. The remaining three engines assigned to the fire will be patrolling and mopping up hot spots along the roads and will continue to do so throughout the weekend, assisted by an additional six personnel.

Closures and restrictions: The fire closure area includes: the **upper reaches of Gash Creek, Sweathouse Creek, Smith Creek and lower reaches of Big Creek areas**. This area closure also includes **all roads and trails in these areas**. The prohibitions cited in the closure order are due to active fire conditions and expected future fire behavior based on high wind weather conditions. These areas are closed to ensure public and firefighter safety. Stage II Fire Restrictions are still in effect due to the hot and dry conditions throughout the area.

A few of the wilderness fires burning in the Bitterroot National Forest's portion of the Selway Bitterroot and the Frank Church Wilderness areas have been putting up smoke, but no significant growth has been observed on any of the 13 active fires that are being managed to benefit the wilderness. As the weather is expected to get unseasonably hotter and drier over the next week, these fires may start to burn more intensely and produce more smoke.

For more information on the Gash Creek Fire or the wilderness fires please call Nan Christianson, Bitterroot National Forest Public Affairs Officer (Acting), at (406) 363-7113 or the Stevensville Ranger District at (406) 777-5461.

Note to the Media – This will be the last update on Bitterroot National Forest fires until Tuesday, September 5, unless significant fire events take place before then. If you have specific questions about fire activity on the forest, please contact Nan Christianson, Acting Public Affairs Officer, at (406) 531-1130.

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